

Workforce Development Council

Executive Committee

August 28

NOTES

Secondary Education: There was general discussion of how secondary education can contribute to building the workforce. It was agreed that this should not be seen as an alternative to, or diversion from, strong academic preparation, but rather an occupational context for building these skills. This would include entrepreneurship as well as trade and technical skills that can lead to postsecondary education and desirable employment opportunities, with an emphasis on skills that will support the competitiveness of Vermont employers and the growth of the State's economy. Fran pointed out that to move the system in this direction there must be incentives for the schools and technical centers. One of these is certainly the opportunity to hold on to students who might otherwise leave before earning a diploma, particularly when the population of school age youth is declining. Beyond that, he suggested that we should be considering assisting schools and tech centers with the cost of starting up such programs, including space, equipment, student outreach, and staff development. The discussion continued on the subject of the Council's role in influencing these issues and how we create leverage. Subsequent to the meeting, Chip researched the new federal Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. The WIA includes a provision that entitles the State WIB (us) to review and comment on the State's plan for the use of these federal resources. The Perkins Act also requires a public engagement process to gather input on the use of the funds. We should discuss this with the Department of Education. Further, the Perkins act includes new requirements for using the funds to support improved career decision making resources for in-school youth, something that aligns well with the needs identified by the Council at our Business/Education conference last winter. We should pursue this with Commissioner Cate at our meeting on Oct 4.

Council Public Relations: Several activities are underway. Chip has assisted the legislative Council in organizing presenters for the Next Generation Commission that will meet on September 19. The Commission is to report to the Legislature in December and is taking abroad look at workforce preparation that includes college and non-degree and adult education programs. We have been invited to by Speaker Symington to assist her with a discussion of workforce issues at her Business Advisory Committee meeting on September 21. As mentioned above, Chip and pat will be meeting with Commissioner Cate on Oct. 4. Chip continues to meet with representatives of the Construction Industry to gather information on the workforce challenges facing that sector.

Stimulating Change:

There was discussion of how the Council can increase its influence on workforce issues. This relates to the PR subject above. Strategies suggested include: Recognition of institutions and programs that are doing innovative and high quality work, looking for

convergences of effort and energy that we can assist and support, using the press because they seem to be interested in this topic, emphasize the themes of demographic change and sector approaches, don't worry about who gets credit, be a catalyst to support those who are trying to get things done.

Next Full Council Meeting:

The timing of this will depend on the appointment of new members which is promised for the Week of Sept. 11. It was suggested that the meeting include:

- An address by the Governor
- Discussion with new members about what they hope to see for workforce development.
- Overview and orientation to the WIA and new State Legislation
- Presentation on the nature of the current labor market - trends and challenges
- Review of Council supported projects and grants - Tech Ed Governance, Single Adult Ed Contract, Major Grants etc. .
- Review of current Council activities - Challenge Statement, Vision, Sectors Strategies and discussion of next steps
- Regional or topical facilitated group discussions
- We might also ask for volunteers to form a committee to select future sectors for study

It was also suggested that we convene, either at the same time or subsequently at one of their regularly scheduled meetings, a group of Superintendents and college Presidents to discuss the responsiveness of the system to the needs of employers.